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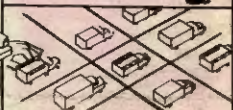
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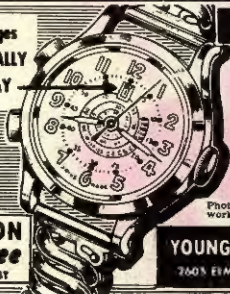
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BLACK RIDER

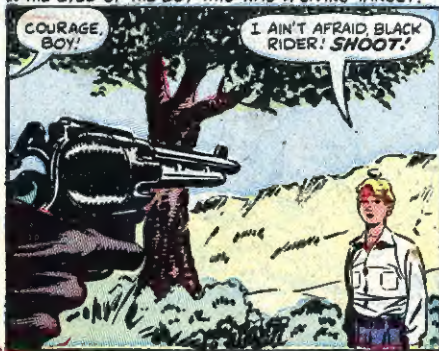
MYSTERY MAN OF THE WESTERN RANGE!

ONE BULLET RESTED IN THE CHAMBER, AND ON THAT BULLET DEPENDED HIS OWN LIFE AND THAT OF AN INNOCENT BOY! THE BLACK RIDER THOUGHT OF WILLIAM TELL AS HE LEVELED A GUN AT THE HEAD OF BOBBY LATHROP!



HIS HAND WAS STEADY AND THERE WAS NO FEAR IN HIS HEART! HE SAW A WORLD OF FAITH AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE EYES OF THE BOY WHO WAS A LIVING TARGET!

AND IN THAT INFINITE SECOND BETWEEN THE FALL OF THE HAMMER AND THE ROAR OF THE GUN, THE BLACK RIDER THOUGHT BACK TO A CERTAIN AFTERNOON NOT LONG AGO...



A PAIR OF WIDE YOUNG EYES FILLED WITH HORROR AS THE TRAGIC DRAMA CONTINUED...

TH- THEY KILLED BUZZY SLOAN AND PETE JENKINS... DAD'S BEST WRANGLERS!

OKAY, BOYS! ROUND UP THEM LONG HORNS AN' LET'S GO!

TRIGGER TRACY AND HIS KILLERS! I GOTTA GET BACK TO THE RANCH AN' TELL DAD!

COME ON, PAINT! MAYBE THE BOYS AREN'T DEAD YET! MAYBE DAD AND HIS MEN CAN STILL GO AFTER THOSE YELLOW COYOTES!

DOC! THEY KILLED SLOAN AN' JENKINS! THEY TRUSTLED A HERD OF OUR BEST CATTLE, TOO!

WHOA, ICHABOD! WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE SAYING, BOBBY?

I SAW 'EM DO IT! IT WAS TRIGGER TRACY AN' HIS SKUNKS! YOU GOTTA HELP, DOC! MEBBE THEY'RE NOT DEAD YET! THEY'RE IN THE PASS YONDER!

GO BACK TO THE RANCH, BOBBY! I'LL RIDE OVER THERE AND TAKE A LOOK! BETTER HAVE YOUR DAD GET OUT HERE IN A HURRY!

OUT OF SIGHT, THE BELOVED DOC MASTERS SWAPPED THE ROLE OF A COUNTRY DOCTOR FOR THE DYNAMIC GARB OF THE BLACK RIDER...

ALL RIGHT, ICHABOD! SHAKE THAT SWAY-BACKED POSE OFF YOUR BONES! YOU'RE THE BLACK RIDER'S STALLION NOW! YOU'RE SATAN!

AN NO MINUTES LATER...

DEAD...MURDERED! BUT THIS TIME THERE'S A WITNESS AGAINST TRIGGER TRACY...AND HE'LL HANG FOR THIS CRIME!



THE TRAIL WAS EASY TO FOLLOW AS IT WOUND THROUGH THE SONORA VALLEY ONTO THE BROAD CHIHUAPEN PLAINS...

THEY MET ANOTHER GROUP OF RIDERS HERE, PASSED THE CATTLE TO THEM AND HEADED EAST! WELL, LET'S PUSH THE TRAIL, SATAN!



LIKE A DARK CLOUD OF IMPENDING DOOM, THE BLACK RIDER LOPED LAZILY INTO THE SUN-BAKED STREETS OF SIERRA...

HERE COMES A MESS OF BLACK TROUBLE! I'M HEADIN' FER COVER!

AN' I'M HEADIN' FER TRIGGER TRACY!



I'M TELLIN' YUH IT'S HIM! WHEN THAT HOMBRE RIDES SLOW, HE'S LOOKIN' FER TROUBLE!

AN' WE'LL GIVE IT TO HIM! GRAB A WINDOW APIECE AN' LET HIM HAVE IT WHILE HE'S STILL OUTSIDE! C'MON, BOYS!



I'LL SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE OF SHOOTING THROUGH WINDOWS! I WANT THE PACK OF YORE FOR THE MURDER OF BUZZY SLOAN AND PETE JENKINS!

YOU'RE TALKIN' THROUGH YORE STETSON, PARONER! WE AIN'T EVER HEARD OF THEM HOMBRES BEFORE!



YOU BUSHWHACKED TWO RIDERS FROM THE BAR L SPREAD! THE LATHROP KID WITNESSED THE MURDERS, AND I AIM TO SEE YOU ALL STAND TRIAL FOR THEM!

FILL HIM WITH LEAD!



THEY HIT THE DECK AND DREW, BUT THE PAIR OF EBONY BLACK COLTS WERE ALREADY MOWING THEM DOWN LIKE WHEAT!



YOU'RE FINISHED, TRACY! ON YOUR FEET, PRONTO!



KEEP 'EM REACHING FOR TIMBER! COME FORWARD SLOW-LIKE AND THEN GET ALL YOUR HANDS TOGETHER!



I CAN SAVE TRACY'S NECK FROM STRETCHING IF I ACT FAST AND PLAY IT SMART!



THE FOLLOWING DAY IN LEADVILLE, A PACKED COURT WATCHED THE TWO KILLERS TRIED FOR MURDER...

THEIR TESTIMONY WILL STAND OR FALL ON THE EVIDENCE OF THE LONE WITNESS! LET THE LATHROP BOY STEP FORWARD!

BOBBY LATHROP! STEP UP TO THE WITNESS STAND!



A HUSH FELL OVER THE COURT! THE BOY'S NAME WAS CALLED SEVERAL TIMES, AND THEN...

BOBBY'S GONE! A COUPLE OF COYOTES SNATCHED HIM FROM THE RANCH WHILE WE WERE OUT IN THE CORRALS!

BOBBY GONE? THAT MEANS THESE MURDERING SWINE WILL BE SET FREE!



YOUR HONOR, CAN'T THESE MEN BE HELD IN CUSTODY UNTIL WE PRODUCE THE WITNESS?

I'D AS SOON SET A PAIR OF TIMBER RATTLEDERS FREE IN A SCHOOLHOUSE AS LET THESE MEN GO... BUT THE LAW SPEAKS FOR ITSELF! WITHOUT A WITNESS TO TESTIFY, THEY **MUST** BE SET FREE!



WAL, IT'S SHORE TOO BAD YOU COULDN'T FIND THE WITNESS! HAW! HAW!





I'M GOIN' AFTER 'EM! I'LL KILL THEM IF IT TAKES THE REST OF MY LIFE! I CAN SHOOT THEM DOWN RIGHT NOW!

DON'T DO IT, LATHROP! THE LAW WILL CATCH UP WITH THEM IN SHORT ORDER... AND BOBBY WILL BE SAFE! I MAKE THAT GOLENN PROMISE!



AN HOUR LATER, THE POWERFUL MUSCLES OF A GREAT STALLION SWALLOWED MILES UNDER THE DRIVE OF DYNAMO STRENGTH...

GET YOUR STRIDE, BOY! WE'RE GAINING ON THEM EVERY SECOND... AND THEY WON'T DREAM THEY'RE BEING FOLLOWED!



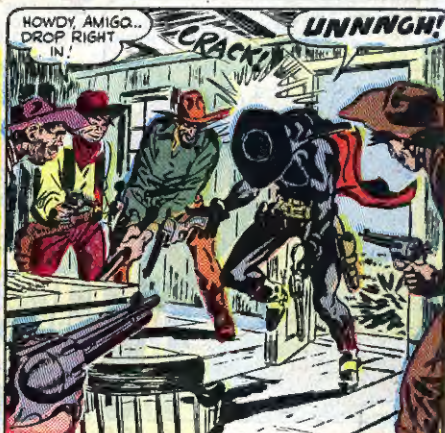
NURSING A SECRET PLAN, THE BLACK RIDER LET THE KILLERS LEAD THE WAY BUT HE WAS NEVER FAR BEHIND...

GOOD! THERE'S THEIR HIDEOUT... AND I'LL WAGER A BIG NUGGET BOBBY IS PRISONER IN THAT SHACK!



LIKE A BLACK PANTHER, HE CLUNG TO THE SHADOWS UNTIL HE REACHED THE SHACK...

NO TELLING HOW MANY ARE INSIDE! I'LL HAVE TO GET IN FAST AND SHOOT EVEN FASTER!



HOWDY AMIGO... DROP RIGHT IN!

UNNNNGH!



AND WHEN CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNED...

I HEAR TELL YOU'RE A POWERFUL KEEN HOMBRE WITH A GUN! WAL, I AIM TO TEST YOUR MARKSMANSHIP!

I'LL DRAW AGAINST YOU DAY OR NIGHT AND FIND A SPOT BETWEEN YOUR EYES EVERY TIME TRACY! WHERE'S THE LATHROP KID?



THERE'S THE KID... SAFE AN' SOUND! TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT HIM, BLACK RIDER! HE'S GOIN' TO BE THE TARGET YOU SHOOT!

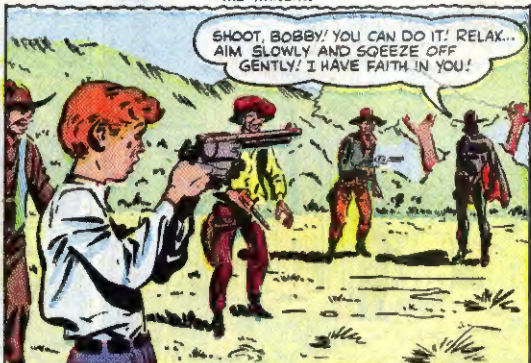
YOU'RE A BLACK-HEARTED SWINE, TRACY, BUT THERE MUST BE SOME SPARK OF MANHOOD LEFT IN YOU! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT'S YOUR INSANE MIND PLANNING!



HE SAW THE BRAVE LIGHT IN THE KID'S EYES! HE RAISED THE SIX-GUN SLOWLY, A PRAYER ON HIS LIPS! THE HAMMER CAME BACK AND STEEL MUSCLES HELD THE GUN STEADY AS IT JERKED!



THEY GAVE THE KID THE GUN AND A MILLION JUMBLED THOUGHTS FLEW THROUGH HIS YOUNG MIND! HE COULDN'T FAIL...AND YET, AS HE RAISED THE HEAVY COLT IN HIS LITTLE HAND, A DOUBT ENTERED HIS MIND...



IT HAPPENED IN A SPLIT FRACTION OF A SECOND, AND THE BLACK RIDER TOOK DEADLY ADVANTAGE OF THE RUSE...

HE GRABBED HIS OWN GUNS, AND THEY THUNDERED AND SHOOK A CASCADE OF DEATH OVER THE BRUTAL KILLERS...

AND WHEN IT WAS OVER, A GRATEFUL PAIR OF ARMS ENCIRCLED THE MAN WHO WAS BOBBY LATHROP'S IDEAL...



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BLACK RIDER

MYSTERY MAN OF THE WESTERN RANGE!

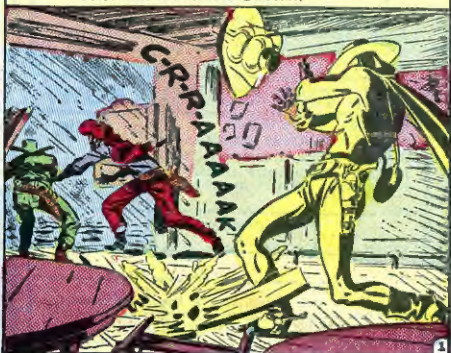
TWO BLOOD-CRAZED KILLERS COWERED UNDER THE BLACK RIDER'S GUNS! THEIR DEATH WAS IMMINENT, BUT A GRIM FATE WAS TO SPARE THEM...A FATE WHICH WOULD LEAVE ALL THREE ACTORS IN THIS DRAMA FACING DEATH FROM ANOTHER SOURCE!



YOU'VE BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH BY A DOZEN COURTS...AND ESCAPED A DOZEN TIMES! THIS TIME THE SENTENCE IS GOING TO BE CARRIED OUT! I'M GOING TO HOLSTER MY GUNS...WHEN I COUNT THREE, WE DRAW!



BUT A SUPERNATURAL FORCE INTERFERED, AND FOR THE THIRTEENTH TIME LUKE GANN AND HUNK DAWSON ESCAPED DEATH!



TOO LATE! THEY'VE GOTTEN AWAY
AGAIN... BUT THIS TIME THEIR
NUMBER IS UP!

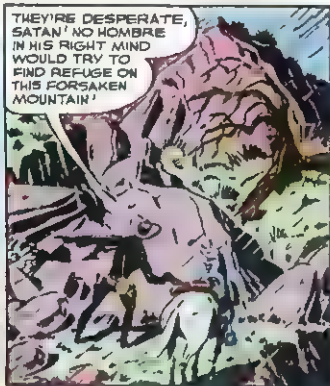


THIRTEEN, SATAN... NUMBER
THIRTEEN! IT'S A JINXED
NUMBER, AND WE'RE GOIN' TO
SEE TO IT THAT THE JINX
STICKS! LET'S GET 'EM, BOY!



THE TRACKS WERE EASY TO FOLLOW,
UNTIL THEY LED UP THE TORTUOUS
SLOPES OF THE DIABLO RANGE...

THEY'RE DESPERATE,
SATAN! NO HOMBRE
IN HIS RIGHT MIND
WOULD TRY TO
FIND REFUGE ON
THIS FORSAKEN
MOUNTAIN!



FIND YOURSELF SOME SHELTER, BOY! I'M
GOIN' UP AFTER THEM! IT'S NO PLACE FOR
A HORSE... OR A MAN EITHER, BUT I'VE GOT
A JOB TO FINISH!



HE STRUCK OUT BOLDLY, SEEKING THE SCRATCHES OF BOOTS
ON ROCKS FOR A TRAIL, BUT THE FURY OF THE STORM TRIED
TO ERASE EVEN THOSE FAINT CLUES...

THEY'VE LEFT THEIR HORSES AND ARE
CLIMBING FAST! THEY'LL HOLE UP SOON
...THEY WON'T FIGURE I'D FOLLOW THEM
IN THIS STORM!



BUT THE FUGITIVES HAD NO IDEA OF HOLING UP! A
TERRIBLE NEW FEAR WAS CREEPING INTO THEIR HEARTS...

WHAT ARE YUN STOPPIN'
FOR? WE GOTTA GO
HIGHER! WE GOTTA
KEEP MOVIN'... STORM
OR NO STORM!

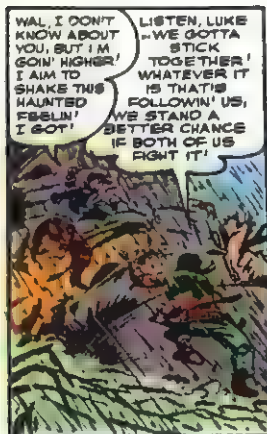
I AIN'T MOVIN' NO MORE! I'M
SCART! I GOT A CREEPY
FEELIN' SOMETHIN' IS
FOLLOWIN' US! IT'S
WATCHIN' US!



Y...YEAH... I GOT THE SAME
FEELIN'! I AIN'T SCART
OF THAT BLACK RIDER
SO MUCH AS I AM
OF SOMETHIN'
ELSE!

I GOT THE FEELIN' AS
SOON AS WE HIT THIS
CURSED RANGE! IT
FEELS LIKE EYES
ARE BORIN' INTO MY
BACK!





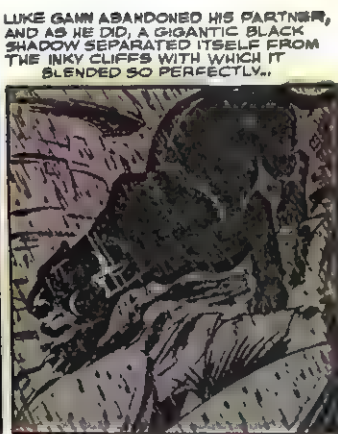
WAL, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I'M GOIN' HIGHER! I AIM TO SHAKE THIS HAUNTED FEELIN' I GOT!

LISTEN, LUKE... WE GOTTA STICK TOGETHER! WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S FOLLOWIN' US, WE STAND A BETTER CHANCE IF BOTH OF US FIGHT IT!



D. DON'T GO, LUKE! I'LL GET US BOTH IF WE BUST UP LIKE THIS!

IT'LL GET YOU... BUT NOT ME! I AIN'T HANGIN' AROUND TO BE SCARED TO DEATH BY SOMETHIN' I CAIN'T SEE!



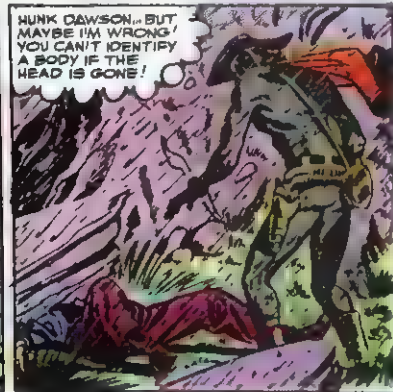
LUKE GANN ABANDONED HIS PARTNER, AND AS HE DID, A GIGANTIC BLACK SHADOW SEPARATED ITSELF FROM THE INKY CLIFFS WITH WHICH IT BLENDED SO PERFECTLY..

WITH UNCAINY INSTINCT THE HUGE BEAST STALKED ITS PREY, AND THEN...



AYIEEEEEEEEEE!

THE BLACK RIDER STARED DOWN AT HUNK DAWSON'S CORPSE AND SHUDDERED INWARDLY.



HUNK DAWSON... BUT MAYBE I'M WRONG! YOU CAN'T IDENTIFY A BODY IF THE HEAD IS GONE!



THERE'S NO LIVING CREATURE IN THE WEST THAT WOULD DO A THING LIKE THAT... NOT EVEN A BUZZARD! MAYBE LUKE GANN DID IT!

HALF AN HOUR LATER ANOTHER THEORY DISSOLVED WITH THE DISCOVERY OF LUKE GANN'S BODY..



LUKE GANN... AND HE DIED THE SAME WAY DAWSON DID!

WITH DAWSON AND GANN
DEAD, MY MISSION IS OVER!
I MIGHT AS WELL GO DOWN...
BUT I GUESS I'LL NEVER
KNOW WHAT KILLED THEM!



AND THEN A GNAWING SUSPICION
BORED ITS WAY INTO HIS THOUGHTS!
HE WAS ALONE ON THE MOUNTAIN
ALONE, THAT IS, WITH AN UNKNOWN
KILLER FAR MORE DANGEROUS
THAN ITS VICTIMS...



I JUST CAN'T GO DOWN...
NOT UNTIL I KNOW WHAT
KILLED THEM!
SOMETHING TELLS
ME I'M ON THE
LIST, TOO!

HE HEARD THE FANTEST SCRAPING BEHIND HIM
AND WHEELED INSTINCTIVELY! THEN HE KNEW!



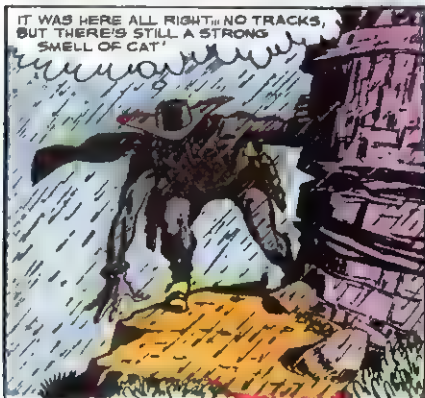
NO GUNS CLEARED HOLSTERS SWIFTER... NO FINGERS
PULLED TRIGGERS QUICKER! AND YET THE TWIN BLASTS
SHATTERED INTO THIN AIR...



I COULDN'T HAVE MISSED. AND YET IT'S GONE MAYBE
I WAS SEEING THINGS! THERE'S NO CAT EVER GREW
THAT BIG OR BOLD! I'M GETTING JUMPY... SHOOTIN'
AT GHOSTS!



REASON DOMINATED DOUBTS, AND HE EDGED CAREFULLY
TOWARD THE SPOT WHERE THE BEAST HAD STOOD...



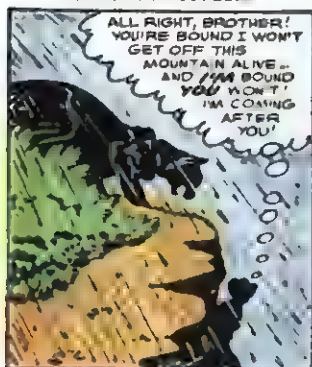
IT WAS HERE ALL RIGHT... NO TRACKS,
BUT THERE'S STILL A STRONG
SMELL OF CAT!

AND QUITE SUDDENLY HE REALIZED THAT THE GREAT
CAT HAD LURED HIM INTO A CRAFTY TRAP.



TRAPPED! THE CAT OUTSMARTED
ME! HE CAN TAKE ME FROM ANY
SIDE! I CAN EITHER JUMP TO
MY DEATH OR CLIMB UP AND
FACE WHAT GANN AND
DAWSON FACED!

AN ALMOST RAUCOUS COUGH JERKED HIS ATTENTION UPWARD, AND HE SAW THE CAT WAITING... ITS BALEFUL EYES PATIENT AND DEADLY.

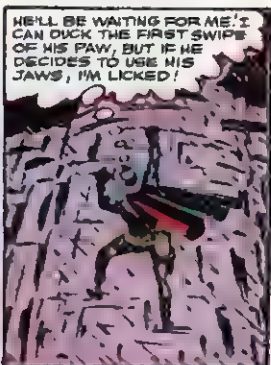


ALL RIGHT, BROTHER! YOU'RE BOUND I WON'T GET OFF THIS MOUNTAIN ALIVE... AND I'M BOUND YOU WON'T! I'M COMING AFTER YOU!

THE PLAN FORMED SWIFTLY IN HIS MIND! HE TOOK A DEEP PULL ON HIS CANTEREN AND STUFFED HIS MOUTH WITH SALT WHICH HE CARRIED IN A SMALL LEATHER POUCH.



HIS GUNS WERE USELESS WHILE HIS HANDS SOUGHT THE SLIGHTEST CRACKS TO GRIP IN THE SHEER WALL ABOVE HIM...



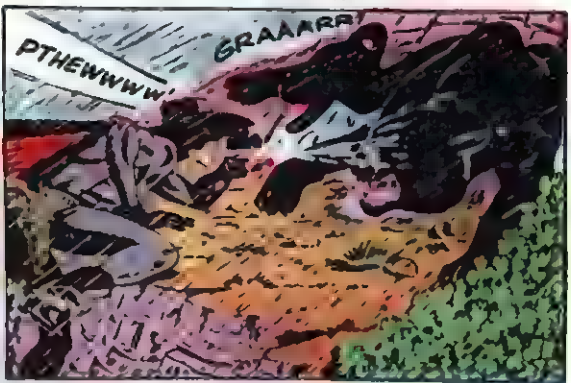
HE'LL BE WAITING FOR ME! I CAN DUCK THE FIRST SWIPE OF HIS PAW, BUT IF HE DECIDES TO USE HIS JAWS, I'M LICKED!

IT WAS A GAMBLE, WITH LIFE OR DEATH AS THE STAKES! HIS HANDS AND FEET WERE OCCUPIED AND ONLY A WILD SCHEME COULD GIVE HIM THE NECESSARY TIME TO USE HIS GUNS...



THIS IS IT! ONE-TWO!

HE LUNGED UPWARD, DUCKED THE CRUSHING PASS OF THE GREAT PAWS, AND SENT A TORRENT OF BITING, AGONIZING SALT WATER INTO THE BRUTE'S EYES!



PTHEWWWW! GRAAARR!



AND WHILE THE BEAST SHOOK ITS GREAT HEAD AGAINST THE BURNING STING OF ITS SALT-FILLED EYES, A PAIR OF BLACK COLTS TOOK AWAY ITS LIFE...



THE SUN CAME OUT AND DRENCHED THE DIABLO RANGE WITH LIGHT AND WARMTH! THERE WAS ONLY A MOUNTAIN... AND A MAN ON A HORSE!



THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN WESTERN THRILLS LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS!

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EVEN the wagon train's scout, old Rawhide McGee, was taken by surprise. One moment, the wagon train was pushing single file through the lush prairie grass, with nothing in sight for miles, and the next moment, ten young Indian warriors in full regalia appeared to spring out of the ground before them.

Old Rawhide was leading the procession of wagons, of course, and right behind him came Tom Decker—the wagon train captain—and sourfaced Hack Sneary, owner of the biggest wagon and the most oxen.

The three men pulled their horses up sharply, and Tom Decker signaled for the train to halt. With a muffled curse, Hack Sneary brought his rifle out of his scabbard and trained it on the nearest young Indian.

Rawhide knocked the rifle down. "Don't start anything, you fool!" he told Hack. "They're not painted for war. It's just a hunting party. If we harm one of them, it'll start an uprising! Wonder why they look so gaunt. Wait a moment, and I'll find out."

Launching into the guttural Indian language, he said, "I am the white man known as Raw-

hide McGee, a friend of all Indians. Many times have I eaten at your campfires. Why do you stop us now, my brothers?"

The tallest young Indian stepped forward. "I am Running Elk," he said, "son of Chief Howling Dog of the Ogallalla Sioux. My father's people live peacefully on the reservation near here. But there is no food to eat, and the old men and the children are starving. There is much wailing around the campfires. We are young—" he pointed to himself and the others of his hunting party—"so we set out to find buffalo. But the white hunters have killed all the buffalo, and my people will starve."

"That is too bad, my friend," answered Rawhide. "But what can we do?"

"You have many oxen with your train," running Elk told him. "Surely you can spare a few to save my people from death."

Old Rawhide turned back to the two waiting men, and explained the Indian's request. "Don't think they're begging," he finished. "The way Indians look at it, if one man has no food, and another has more than enough, it's only proper

they share it. And they always pay their debts."

Tom Decker scratched his head. "Guess we'd like to help 'em out," he said, "but who'll be able to spare the oxen? I wonder—"

"Shucks," said Hack Sneary. "I'd be plumb glad to do it. You tell 'em to wait here, and I'll go slaughter a couple right away." He wheeled his horse around, and headed for his wagon, leaving the other two men staring after him, open-mouthed.

For no one in train had thought highly of Hack, with his close-mouthed, grumpy ways, always talking about how all the Indians should be wiped out and their land given to white settlers. Even old Rawhide, who lived with Hack Sneary during the trip, didn't believe Hack would ever do a kind thing for an Indian.

Meanwhile, Hack Sneary was grinning to himself as he killed two prime oxen. Carefully, he placed strychnine poison throughout the meat. For Hack knew that when the Indians ate the poisoned meat, and some of them died, the rest of the Sioux would go on the warpath. Then the Army would have to put

continued after next page

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down the Indian rebellion in a bloody battle, and as a punishment, the tribe would be deprived of much of its land. And Hack Sneary figured he could take a large part of this prairie for himself, instead of riding to Oregon with the rest of the wagon train.

The job of poisoning completed, Hack rode back to Rawhide, Tom Decker, and the hunting party.

"Tell 'em they'll find the slaughtered cattle over by my wagon," he told Rawhide.

"I'll take 'em over there, myself.

Rawhide, nodded, grinning. And thanks, Hack. You'll have friends among the Ogallalla Sioux from now on."

As Rawhide led the young Indians off, Hack smirked to himself. The only friends he'd have among the Indians would be the dead ones. But they'd be his friends, all right. They'd help give him their land!

"Never thought I'd see you giving food to Indians, Hack," Tom Decker said. "Guess I was wrong, though. You're a pretty decent man, after all."

Hack shrugged his shoulders, and the two men soon saw the Indian hunting party set off, carrying the butchered beef on their shoulders. They waved good-by to Hack and Tom, and Rawhide rode with them part of the way.

It was getting dark when Rawhide returned. All the families were sitting at fires in front of their wagons, preparing supper. Many waved for him to join them, but Rawhide shook his head and headed for Hack

Sneary's campfire.

Hack was finishing a huge steak as Rawhide rode up. Rawhide tethered his horse and strode over to the campfire.

"I rode with Running Elk and his friends for about two miles," Rawhide said. "They're walkin' slow, and they won't reach the reservation till day-



break. They're awful hungry, but they won't eat until they get the food to the rest of the tribe."

Hack shrugged, his mouth full. Then he swallowed and said, "Nice of you, Rawhide, to set supper up before you left. I found two big steaks sizzling when I came up to the wagon. Left one for you, though."

Rawhide squatted on the ground, grinning. "It wasn't me," he said.

Hack looked up in alarm.

"Then who—"

"Why, Running Elk and his friends. I told you the Sioux always pay their debts. Much as they needed the meat at home, they cut off two choice steaks from the beef you gave 'em and set them up for you and me. It's their way of showin' their appreciation—"

Then he stopped. Hack Sneary was rolling on the ground howling and clutching his stomach. Tom Decker and a couple of other men, attracted by the noise, ran over to Hack's campfire.

"Help me, somebody!" Hack bellowed. "I poisoned the beef I gave the Sioux! Now I've eaten it and I'm going to die. Help!"

"Why'd you do it, Hack?" Tom Decker demanded.

"I wanted their land, figured I'd get it if they went on the warpath. Please, I'm dyin'..."

It was too late. Before anyone could step forward, Hack gave a terrible groan, rolled over on his side, and died.

Rawhide sprung for his horse. "I can get to Running Elk before anyone touches the meat!" he yelled.

"Bring the Indian boys back, Rawhide," Tom Decker shouted after him. "This time we'll have good honest beef waitin' for 'em."



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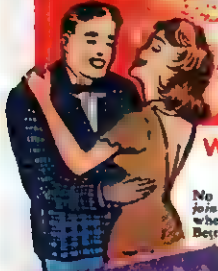
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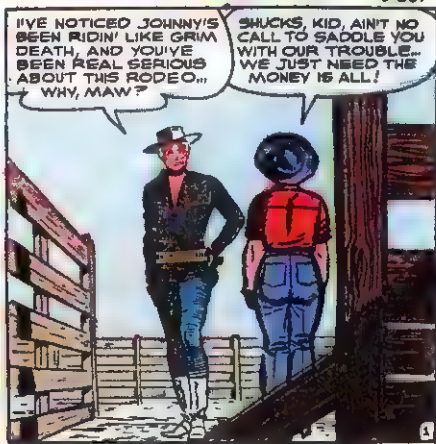
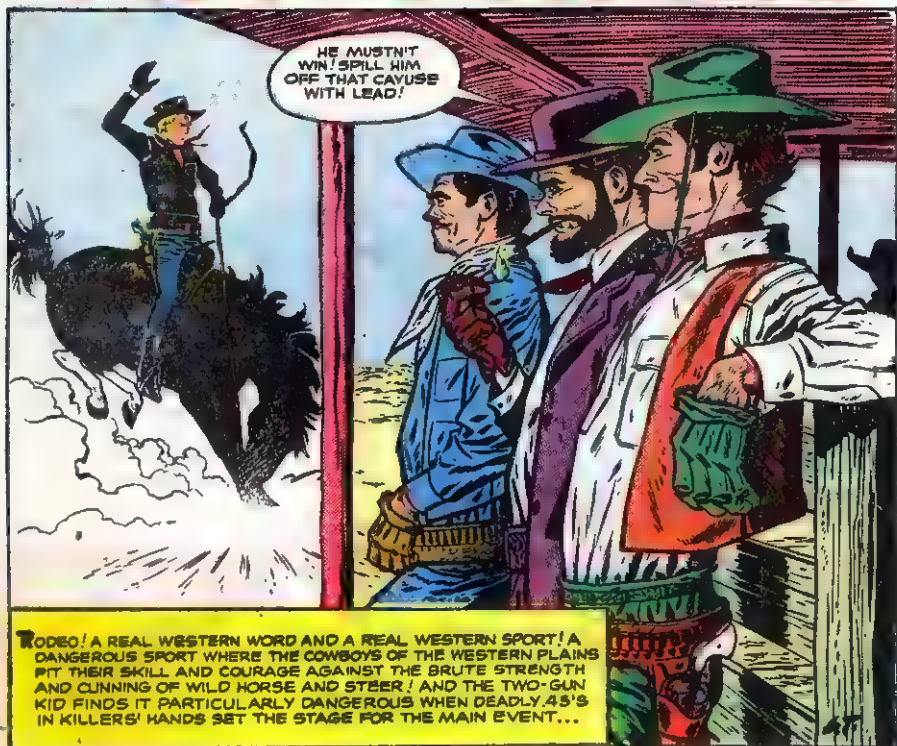


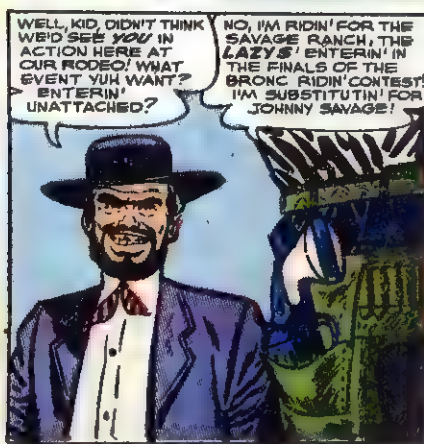
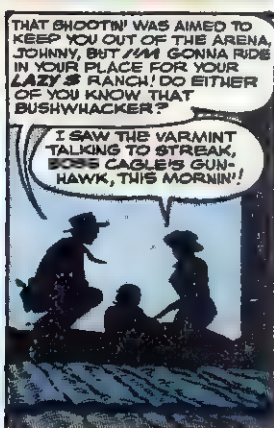
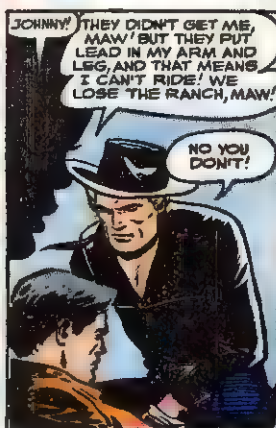
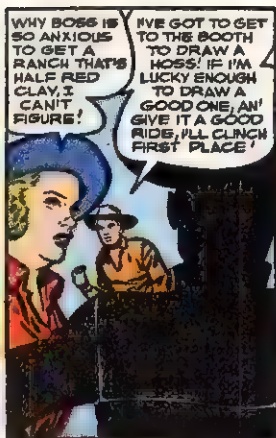
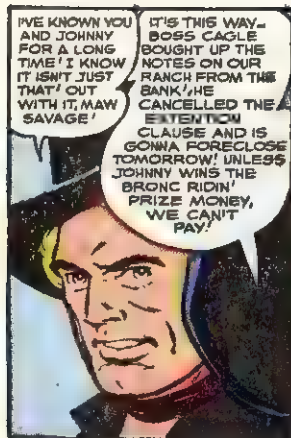
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TWO-GUN KID





THE TWO-GUN KID SAW THE QUICK SIGNAL THAT PASSED BETWEEN BOSS AND OX FRESNO! HIS EYES NARROWED AND A SMILE TOUCHED HIS GRIM LIPS...

YUH CAN'T DO THAT! IT'S AGAINST THE RULES OF THIS HERE RODEO! SIDES, IT'S TOO LATE TO ENTER!

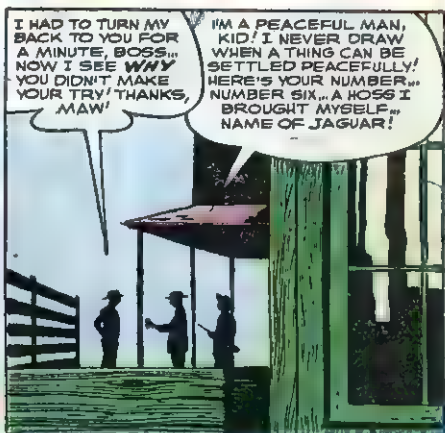
THERE'S NOTHING IN RODEO RULES AGAINST IT! AND IT'S **NOT** TOO LATE! NOW STOP PUSHING AND DRAW ME A HOSS!



I TOLD YOU TO STOP PUSHIN'!

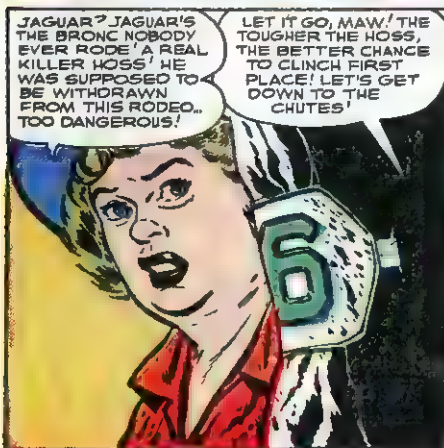


STAY PUT, BOSS! NO CALL FOR YOU TO BUTT INTO THIS FRACAS!



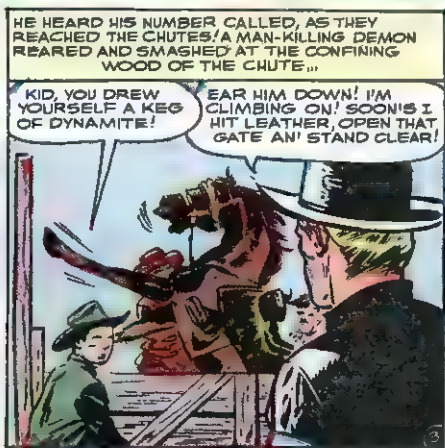
I HAD TO TURN MY BACK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE, BOSS... NOW I SEE **WHY** YOU DIDN'T MAKE YOUR TRY! THANKS, MAW!

I'M A PEACEFUL MAN, KID! I NEVER DRAW WHEN A THING CAN BE SETTLED PEACEFULLY! HERE'S YOUR NUMBER... NUMBER SIX... A HOSS I BROUGHT MYSELF... NAME OF JAGUAR!



JAGUAR? JAGUAR'S THE BRONC NOBODY EVER RODE! A REAL KILLER HOSS! HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM THIS RODEO... TOO DANGEROUS!

LET IT GO, MAW! THE TOUGHER THE HOSS, THE BETTER CHANCE TO CLINCH FIRST PLACE! LET'S GET DOWN TO THE CHUTES!

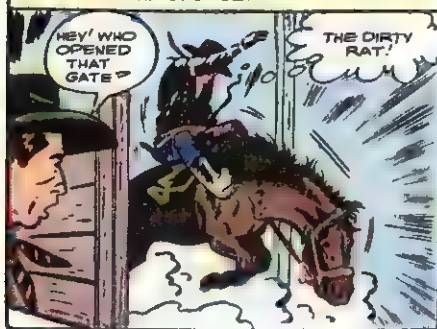


HE HEARD HIS NUMBER CALLED, AS THEY REACHED THE CHUTES! A MAN-KILLING DEMON REARED AND SMASHED AT THE CONFINING WOOD OF THE CHUTE...

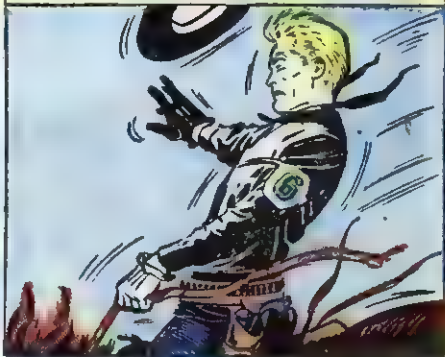
KID, YOU DREW YOURSELF A KEG OF DYNAMITE!

EAR HIM DOWN! I'M CLIMBING ON! SOON'S I HIT LEATHER, OPEN THAT GATE AN' STAND CLEAR!

THE KID, WAITING HIS CHANCE, LOWERED HIMSELF TOWARD THE HEAVING SADDLE. THEN THE GATE SWUNG OPEN! IN A SINGLE FLASH, THE KID SAW BOSS CAGLE'S FOREMAN HOLDING THE GATE ROPE. THE SCREAMING HORSE REARED TO LEAP OUT AND HE THREW HIMSELF INTO THE SADDLE...



SOMEHOW HE SHOVED HIS FEET HOME INTO THE STIRRUPS. SOMEHOW HE GRABBED THE WILD FLYING HALTER ROPE AND RODE THAT MAD, SCREAMING CROSS BETWEEN A TORNADO AND A WILDCAT!

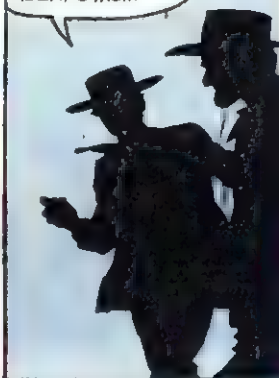


THAT CRAZY BUCKAROO'S RIDIN' THAT MAN-KILLER! KNOCK HIM OFF WITH LEAD! WE GOT TO HAVE THAT LAZY S RANCH!

THE WAY THAT BRONG'S SUNFISHIN', I CAN'T HIT HIM!



NEVER MIND! I GOT A BETTER IDEA! C'MON!

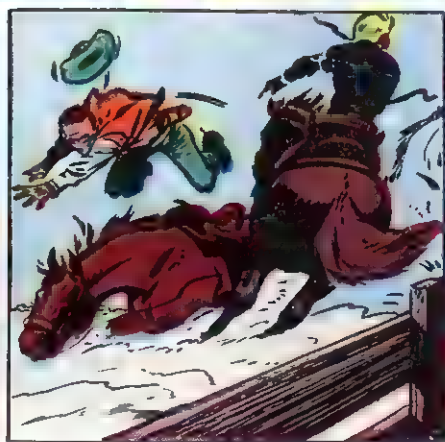


HIS NOSE WAS BLEEDING, HIS BONES FELT LIKE JELLY FROM THE POUNDING...BUT THE WILD BRONG WAS WEAKENING! THAT'S WHEN THE KID HEARD THE GUNSHOTS!

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DON'T MOVE OR YOU'LL COLLECT LEAD!





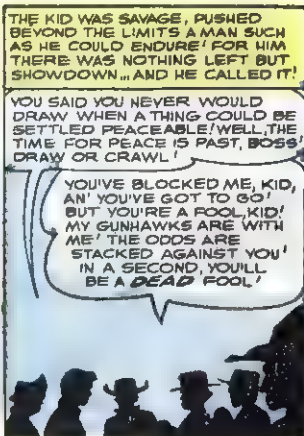
RECOGNIZE 'EM MAW?

YEAH! TWO OF BOSS CAGLE'S MEN!



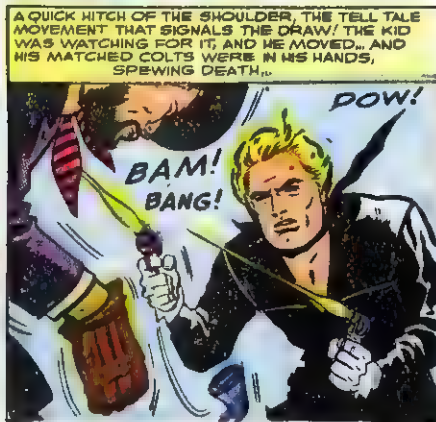
NOW LET'S NOT JUMP AT CONCLUSIONS, FOLKS!

WE WON'T! WE'RE LOOKIN' AT FACTS! AN' THE BIGGEST FACT IS THAT YOU'RE A DIRTY RAT!



THE KID WAS SAVAGE, PUSHED BEYOND THE LIMITS A MAN SUCH AS HE COULD ENDURE! FOR HIM THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT BUT SHOWDOWN... AND HE CALLED IT! YOU SAID YOU NEVER WOULD DRAW WHEN A THING COULD BE SETTLED PEACEABLE! WELL, THE TIME FOR PEACE IS PAST, BOSS! DRAW OR CRAWL!

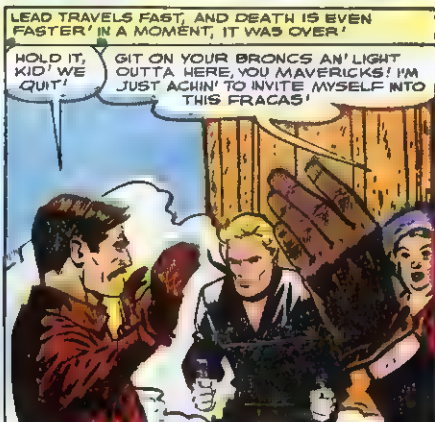
YOU'VE BLOCKED ME, KID, AN' YOU'VE GOT TO GO BUT YOU'RE A FOOL KID! MY GUNHAWKS ARE WITH ME! THE ODDS ARE STACKED AGAINST YOU! IN A SECOND, YOU'LL BE A DEAD FOOL!



A QUICK HITCH OF THE SHOULDER, THE TELL TALE MOVEMENT THAT SIGNALS THE DRAW! THE KID WAS WATCHING FOR IT AND HE BOOMED... AND HIS MATCHED COLTS WERE IN HIS HANDS, SPEWING DEATH...

BAM!
BANG!

DOW!



LEAD TRAVELS FAST, AND DEATH IS EVEN FASTER! IN A MOMENT, IT WAS OVER!

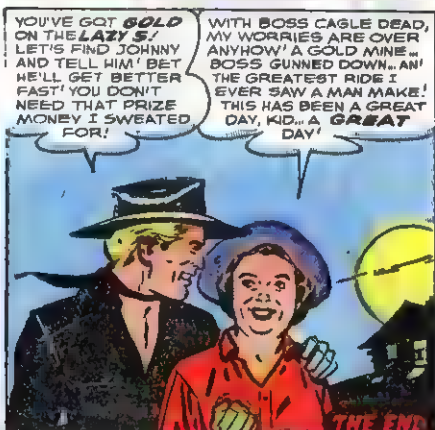
HOLD IT, KID! WE QUIT!

GIT ON YOUR BRONCS AN' LIGHT OUTTA HERE, YOU MAVERICKS! I'M JUST ACHIN' TO INVITE MYSELF INTO THIS FRACAS!



LOOKIT HERE! THESE ROLLED OUT OF CAGLE'S POCKET! THEY LOOK LIKE NUGGETS! KINDA RUSTY LOOKIN' THOUGH!

RUSTY LOOKIN'? THAT'S RED CLAY ON THEM, MAW! AND THE LAZY S IS THE ONLY RANCH HEREABOUTS THAT'S GOT A SECTION OF RED CLAY! NOW I KNOW WHY THE BUZZARD WANTED YOUR RANCH SO BAD, MAW!



YOU'VE GOT GOLD ON THE LAZY S! LET'S FIND JOHNNY AND TELL HIM! BET HE'LL GET BETTER FAST! YOU DON'T NEED THAT PRIZE MONEY I SWEATED FOR!

WITH BOSS CAGLE DEAD, MY WORRIES ARE OVER ANYHOW! A GOLD MINE... BOSS GUNNED DOWN... AN! THE GREATEST RIDE I EVER SAW A MAN MAKE! THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT DAY, KID... A GREAT DAY!

THE END

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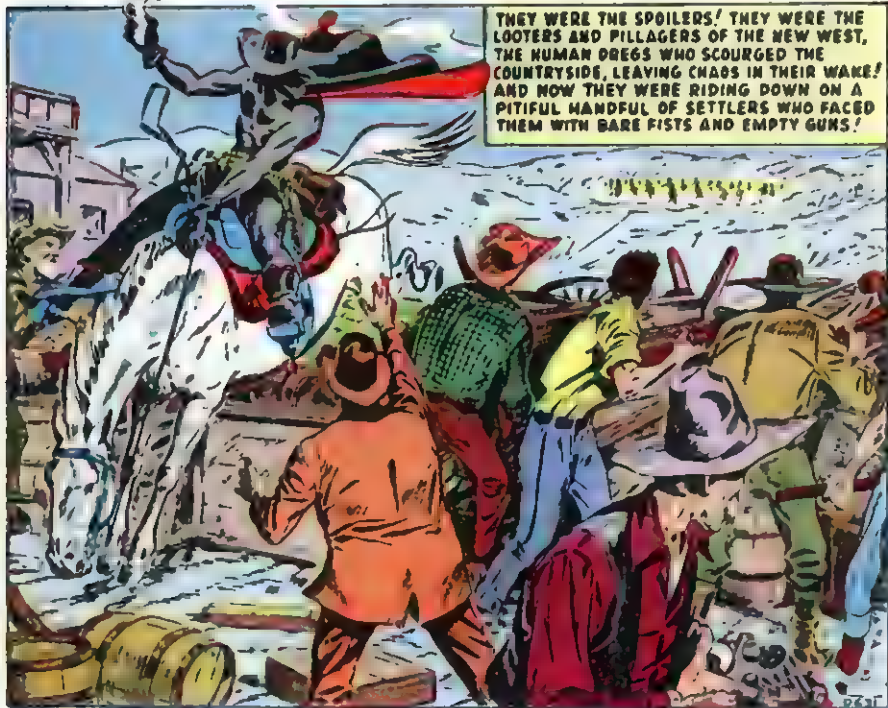
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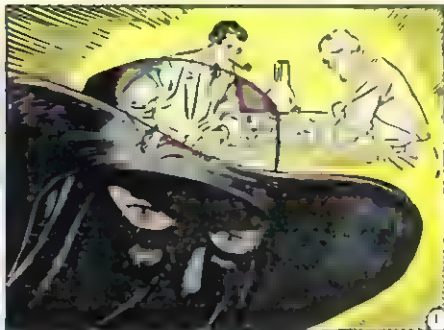
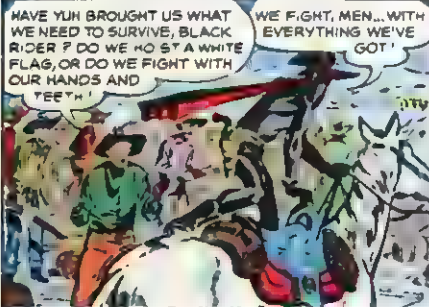
BLACK RIDER

MYSTERY MAN OF THE WESTERN RANGE!



THE DEFENDERS TURNED DESPERATELY TO THE BLACK RIDER, THEIR FACES ANXIOUS AND PLEADING. BULLETS POURED INTO THE BARRICADES AS THE MARAUDERS THUNDERED CLOSER AND CLOSER!

THE HOOFS BEATS THUNDERED CLOSER, AND IN THEIR CLAMOR THE BLACK RIDER'S MIND WENT BACK TO A PEACEFUL EVENING IN JUNE



A DAY'S WORK WAS DONE AND TWO GOOD FRIENDS, DOC MASTERS AND JIM LATHROP, RELAXED WITH A GAME OF CHECKERS...

YORE MOVE, DOC! YOU AIN'T HAD YORE MIND ON THIS GAME ALL EVENIN'!

HUH? OH, EXCUSE ME, JIM! I RECKON MY MIND WAS STRAYIN A BIT!

WAL, *MY* MIND AIN'T ON THE GAME EITHER! IT'S SMACK DAB IN THE LEADVILLE JAIL AND THE TWO KILLERS WE GOT PENNED UP THERE!

SHAG ENOCH AND JESS CANTRELL, EH? THAT PAIR OF BUZZARDS HAS *ME* WORRIED, TOO! I GUESS THEY'RE SAFE ENOUGH!

THAT'S JUST IT, DOC! THERE AIN'T NO PEN THIS SIDE OF YUMA STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD 'EM! I TOLD SHERIFF TATE TO GET 'EM DOWN THERE!

WELL, THE POSSE WILL ESCORT- THEM TO YUMA TOMORROW! LET'S GET ON WITH THE GAME, JIM!

IN THE LEADVILLE JAIL, A MURDER PLOT WAS SLOWLY BEARING FRUIT...

WAL, HERE'S THE WATER YOU'VE BEEN BAWLIN' FOR, ENOCH! TAKE IT 'FORE I DUMP IT ON THE FLOOR!

I'LL TAKE IT, YOU BADGE-SPORTIN' SKUNK...AN' I'LL TAKE YORE LIFE WITH IT!

M-MY ARM! EEEYOOOWWW!

ARGHH!

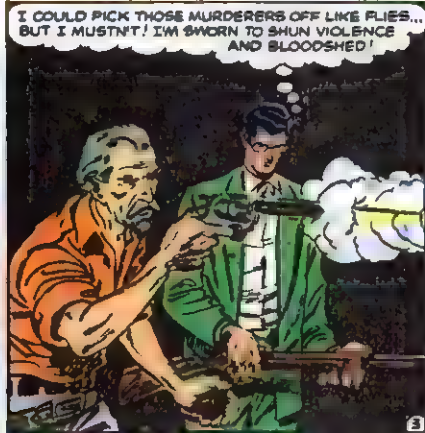
MEBBE SOMEONE HEARD HIM, AN' MEBBE NOT! I'LL BE OUT OF HERE 'FORE THEY COME A-RYNNIN'!



MINUTES LATER, THE LEADVILLE JAIL HURTLED SKYWARD IN A SHEET OF FLAME, SMOKE AND FLYING DEBRIS...



SUDDENLY, THE TWO MEN FROZE AS HOOPS THUNDERED OUT OF THE NIGHT...

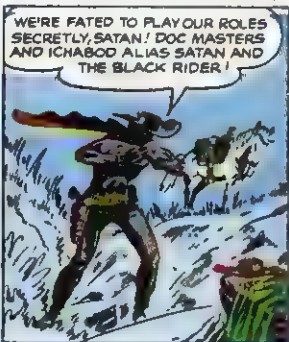




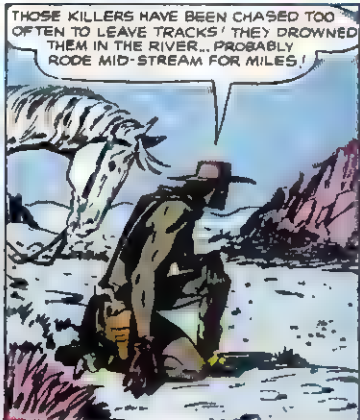
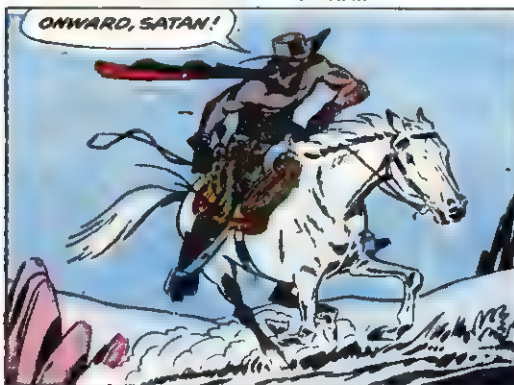
DOC MASTERS LEFT, AWARE OF THE MEANING IN MARIE LATHROP'S EYES...



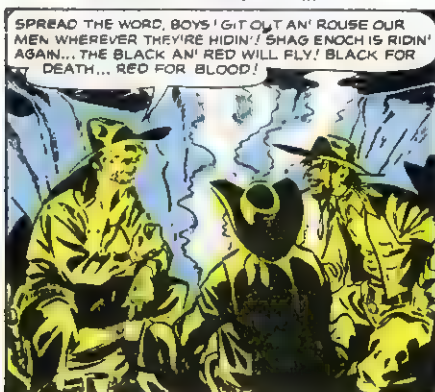
BUT OUT OF SIGHT OF THE LATHROP RANCH, DOC MASTERS SWIFTLY SHED HIS PEACEFUL GARB FOR THE ROBES OF THE WEST'S MOST DREADED GUN-SLINGER...THE BLACK RIDER!



AND THE FAMOUS DUO THUNDERED ACROSS THE PLAINS ON THE TRAIL OF THE MARAJDERS...



SHAG ENOCH'S GRIM PLANS WERE LAID BY DAWN IN THE SHADOW OF SAGE CITY...

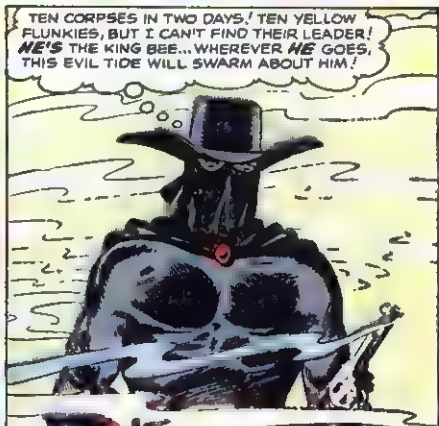
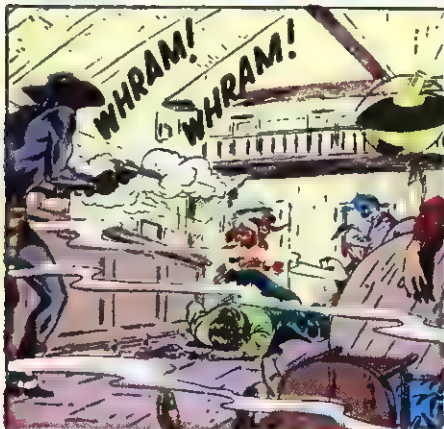


WHEREVER THE WORD SPREAD...WHEREVER THE NAME WAS MENTIONED, THERE WERE EAGER TAKERS, MEN OF EVIL GREED... MEN WHO WERE THE DESTROYERS, NOT THE BUILDERS...



BUT, WHEREVER THEY CONGREGATED, THERE ALSO STALKED THE MAN WHO WAS PLEDGED TO DECIMATE THEIR RANKS...

HANDS STREAKED FOR HOLSTERS, ONLY TO STIFFEN IN DEATH AS THE SPITTING COLTS OF THE BLACK RIDER CARRIED OUT THEIR MASTER'S THREAT...



AND THE EVIL GENIUS OF CRIME AND SLAUGHTER HELD COURT IN A HIDDEN HOLLOW...

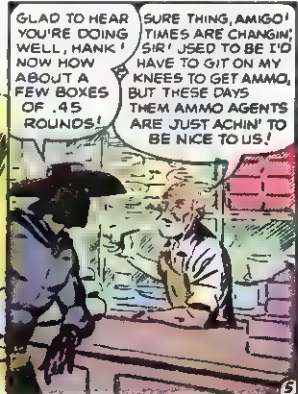
YEAH, I KNOW! THE BLACK RIDER CUT DEEP INTO OUR RANKS, BUT WE AIN'T LICKED BY A LONG SHOT! HE GOT THE WEAKLINGS AND THE STRAYS! GOOD RIDDANCE, I SAY!

NOW, LIKE I WAS SAYIN'... A TOWN CAN'T DEFEND ITSELF IF THERE'S NO BULLETS TO FIT THEIR GUNS! SO HERE'S MY PLAN...

THREE DAYS LATER, IN THE DOOMED VILLAGE OF LEADVILLE...

GLAD TO HEAR YOU'RE DOING WELL, HANK! NOW HOW ABOUT A FEW BOXES OF .45 ROUNDS!

SURE THING, AMIGO! TIMES ARE CHANGIN', SIR! USED TO BE I'D HAVE TO GIT ON MY KNEES TO GET AMMO, BUT THESE DAYS THEM AMMO AGENTS ARE JUST ACHIN' TO BE NICE TO US!

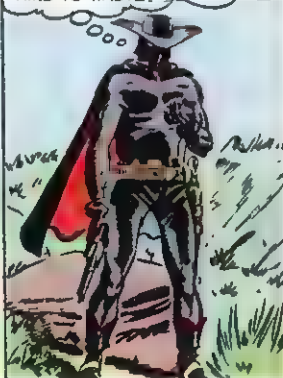




A ROCK ARCED GRACEFULLY INTO THE AIR... THE BLACK RIDER TOOK AIM AND...



THIS IS A SHAG ENOCH TRICK OR I MISS MY GUESS! THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE!



YOU HEARD ME, HANK! I'M BUYING EVERY CASE OF CARTRIDGES THAT AGENT GAVE YOU. AND I WANT TWO KEGS OF BLACK POWDER AND ALL THE PRIMERS YOU GOT IN THE PLACE!

RECKON WHAT YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO, BLACK RIDER! TAKE WHAT YUH WANT!



ROUND UP PACKRAT PÊTE AND EVERY MAN WHO KNOWS HOW TO RELOAD A CARTRIDGE! I'LL BE BACK HERE IN HALF AN HOUR!

RIGHT, BLACK RIDER!

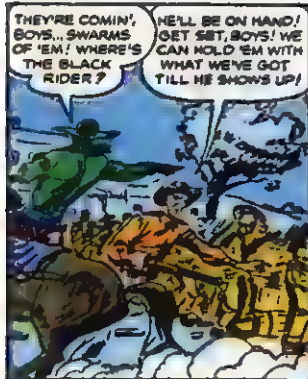


LATER, IN THE LEADVILLE TOWN HALL...

I CAN ONLY ASK THAT YOU PLACE YOUR FAITH IN ME! BUILD YOUR BARRICADES AT BOTH ENDS OF THE TOWN! BUILD THEM HIGH AND STRONG... AND WAIT FOR ME! SHAG ENOCH WILL STRIKE AT DUSK!



THE BARRICADES WENT UP SWIFTLY FOR THESE FREE MEN FIGHTING FOR THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR HOMELAND...



THEY'RE COMIN', BOYS... SWARMS OF 'EM! WHERE'S THE BLACK RIDER?

HE'LL BE ON HAND! GET SET, BOYS! WE CAN HOLD 'EM WITH WHAT WE'VE GOT TILL HE SHOWS UP!

THE SIX-GUNS WAITED! IT WAS THE LONG RANGE WEAPONS THAT WOULD TAKE THEIR TOLL ON THE APPROACHING MARAUDERS...

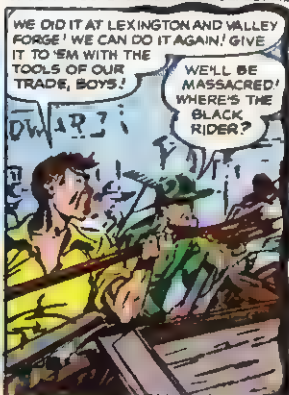


WHAT THE...? THIS AMMO AIN'T WORTH A WOODEN PESO!

WE'RE LOADED WITH DUDS!

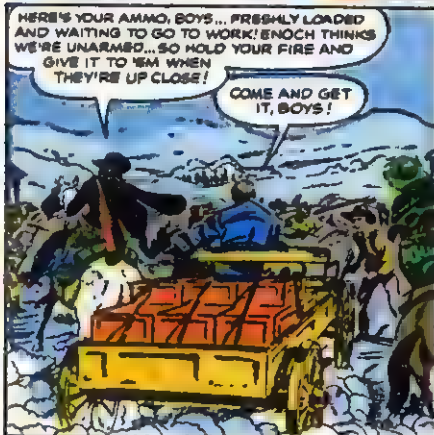
CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

THE HUMAN TIDE CAME ON, BUT THE GALLANT DEFENDERS WERE HELPLESS...



WE DID IT AT LEXINGTON AND VALLEY FORGE! WE CAN DO IT AGAIN! GIVE IT TO 'EM WITH THE TOOLS OF OUR TRADE, BOYS!

WE'LL BE MASSACRED! WHERE'S THE BLACK RIDER?



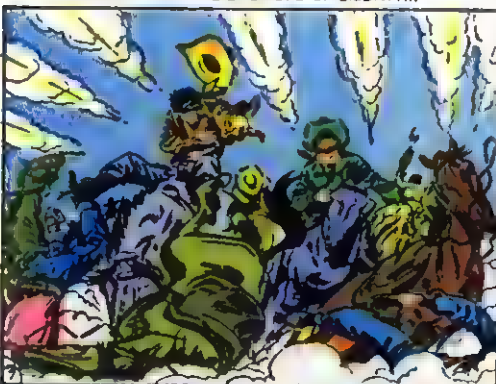
HERE'S YOUR AMMO, BOYS... FRESHLY LOADED AND WAITING TO GO TO WORK! ENOCH THINKS WE'RE UNARMED... SO HOLD YOUR FIRE AND GIVE IT TO 'EM WHEN THEY'RE UP CLOSE!

COME AND GET IT, BOYS!

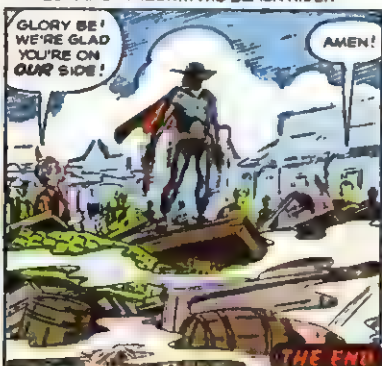
THE SPOILERS CAME ON... CLOSER AND CLOSER! AND JUST AS THEY CAME WITHIN RANGE, A MIGHTY PUKILLADE BLASTED INTO THEIR RANKS...



STILL THEY CAME, THOSE IN THE REAR SWARMING OVER THE BODIES OF THE FORWARD ELEMENTS! NOT A MAN OR A HORSE REACHED THE BASTIONS OF LIBERTY...



THE LAST TWO SHOTS FOUND THEIR MARKS IN SHAG ENOCH AND JESS CANTRELL, AND A HUMBLE POPULACE PAID SILENT TRIBUTE TO ITS LEADING CITIZEN... THE BLACK RIDER!



GLORY BE! WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE ON OUR SIDE!

AMEN!

THE END

FOR THE BEST IN WESTERN THRILLS LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER!



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Remember, if you don't get a sufficient quantity of Vitamin B₁ in your daily diet, you may suffer loss of appetite. And without sufficient iron, the element that helps build rich red blood,

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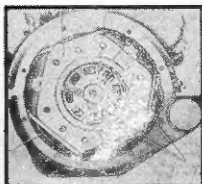
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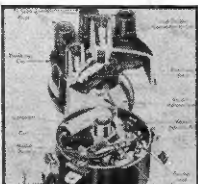
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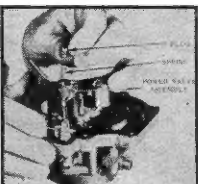
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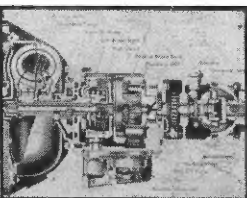
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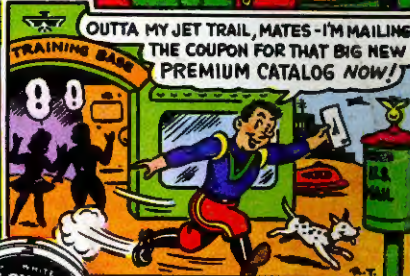
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Record Players, Movie Machines
(postage pd.). Rush cou-
pon to start!

LET'S
GO!
Sponsored by
Good Housekeeping



ACT
NOW

Feed Chop-
pers, Coring
Sets, Bibles.
Mail coupon.

LOOK!

Football, Tele-
scopes (sent postage
paid). Boys', Girls' Bi-
cycles (express
chgs. collect).



ACT
NOW!

WE TRUST
YOU!

22 Cal.
Rifles, School
Sets, Archery
Boxes, Wallsets.
Mail coupon for
SALVE and
pictures to start.



Boys', Girls'
Wrist
Watches,
Baking Sets,
Typewriters,
etc.



ACT NOW!

Wilson Chemical Co., Dept. 8-148, Tyrone, Pa. De-
Gentlemen: Please send me on trial 14 colorful art pic-
tures with 14 boxes of White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE to
sell at 35c a box (with picture). I will remit amount asked
within 30 days, select a Premium or keep Cash Commis-
sion as explained under Premium wanted in catalog sent
with order, postage paid to start.

NAME _____ AGE _____
ST. _____ R. D. _____ BOX _____
TOWN _____ ZONE MO. _____ STATE _____
PRINT LAST NAME HERE

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OUR 59th YEAR - WE ARE RELIABLE! MAIL

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